4/7/64

Fulbright Charges Failure in Control Over the Military

CHAPEL HILL, N.C., April 6 (AP) — Sen J. W. Fulbright, who only 12 days ago touched off an explosive debate on foreign policy, now says "the American people are not now exercising effective control over the military, and neither is the Congress."

The charge by the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in a speech last night at the University of North Carolina seemed almost certain to stir another controversy — this time with the Pentagon.

The Arkansas Democrat's March 25 foreign policy speech richocheted through both halls of Congress, the State Department the White House. It's still drawing fire in some quarters.

His comments on the military came last night in a keynote speech to the 1964 Carolina Symposium, a five-day series of lectures at the University on the topic "Arms and the man: national security and the aims of a free society."

Sees Vested Interest

Fulbright said the military establishment has a vested interest in the continuation of the cold war and its high military spending.

He said the "elimination of superfluous defense funds" would encourge spending on domestic programs, adding:

"The cold war is an excuse, as well as a cause" for high military budgets.

Fulbright's comment about control of the military recalled a statement by former President Eisenhower in his farewell address as Chief Executive on Jan. 17, 1961.

At that time Gen. Eisenhower warned of the need to "guard against the acquisition of unwarranted influence, whether sought or unsought, by the military-industrial complex."

"Only an alert and knowledgeable citizenry can compel the proper meshing of the huge industrial and military machinery of defense without peaceful methods and goals," Gen. Eisenhower said.

Called Well Taken

His views were described a year later as "well taken" by President Kennedy.

Ironically, Fulbright's criticism of the lack of civilian control over the military came only hours after General of the Army Douglas MacArthur died in Washington.

MacArthur was dismissed as commander of United Nations and United States forces in Korea in April 1951, by President Truman after a policy clash. Mr. Truman said he fired MacArthur because military commanders must operate within the framework of the U.S. Constitution, which gives supreme authority as commander-in-chief to a civilian—the President.

In his address last night, Fulbright pursued one of the points of his March 25 Senate speech. He said the Nation's interests could be served better by ending the present "morbid preoccupation with the danger of Communist expansion abroad and subversion and disloyalty at home."

He said President Johnson's proposed war on poverty and other education-welfare programs "are at least as important to the security of our country in the long term as a national defense establishment and a good deal more important than a voyage to the moon."

In his earlier speech, he had urged abandonment of what he called "old myths" in cold war attitudes in the face of today's "new realities."

Some critics charged that the March 25 speech was a trial balloon sent up in behalf of the Administration. But Fulbright, the White House and Secretary of State Dean Rusk denied this.

Johnson and Rusk made it clear that they did not go along with Fulbright's criticism of U.S. policy toward Cuba and Panama.